

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 03769 081825Z
ACTION STR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 STRE-00 AGRE-00
CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FRB-03 H-01
INR-10 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
CTME-00 AID-05 SS-15 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 SP-02
SOE-02 OMB-01 DOE-11 /127 W
-----019874 081829Z /45

P R 081811Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3924
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03769

PASS STR ELECTRONICALLY

USEEC

MISSION ALSO FOR USMTN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ETRD, GATT, UK, EC, KS
SUBJECT: UK/EC SAFEGUARD ACTION ON KOREAN TV SETS

REF: (A) STATE 55977; (B) SEOUL 1798; (C) GENEVA 3572

1. COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR YU OF THE KOREAN EMBASSY, IN A CONVERSATION ON MARCH 8, CONFIRMED THAT ASSISTANT MINISTER CHOI WAS HERE LAST WEEK, ACCOMPANYING THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (PRESUMABLY FOR THE CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE MENTIONED IN REF B) AND VISITED THE UK DEPARTMENT OF TRADE FOR A "VERY BRIEF TALK", IN WHICH HE RAISED THE TV SET ISSUE.

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2. WHILE YU SEEMED NOT TO HAVE DETAILS ON THE CHOI CONVERSATION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, HE DID STATE THAT THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT HAS STILL NOT DECIDED WHETHER TO RAISE THIS SUBJECT AT THE MARCH 14 GATT COUNCIL. THIS IS BEING DISCUSSED BY THE KOREAN EMBASSY HERE, THE KOREAN MISSION IN GENEVA, AND (PRESUMABLY) THE GOVERN-

MENT IN SEOUL.

3. EARLIER ON MARCH 8 WE DISCUSSED THE SAME SUBJECT WITH ROBIN GRAY, DEPUTY SECRETARY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, AND EILEEN HARDING OF HIS STAFF. THEY ALSO TOLD US THE KOREAN ASSISTANT MINISTER WAS IN TO TALK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE LAST WEEK. THEY GAVE NO DETAILS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONVERSATION, BUT DID SAY THAT THE KOREANS HAD "LET SLIP" THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS URGING THEM ON.

4. GRAY, AS IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION, SEEMED DIS-INCLINED TO GET INTO A DISCUSSION, MUCH LESS AN ARGUMENT OVER THIS ISSUE. HOWEVER, MS HARDING, WHO IS THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE'S SAFEGUARDS EXPERT, WAS NOT AT ALL DEFENSIVE ABOUT THE UK/EC ACTION. SHE DEFENDED SELECTIVITY AS GATT-CONSISTENT, THOUGH SHE ADMITTED THIS IS AN ARGUABLE POINT, AND SHE ARGUED STRONGLY THAT THE CONSENSUAL OR NON-CONSENSUAL NATURE OF A SAFEGUARD ACTION MAKES NO DIFFERENCE AS FAR AS ART XIX IS CONCERNED. WE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT IF THE ISSUE IS JOINED IN THE GATT COUNCIL, THE COMMUNITY PROBABLY WILL BE URGED BY THE UK TO ARGUE (A) THERE IS NO ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE, FROM THE ART. XIX STANDPOINT, BETWEEN THE BRITISH/EC ACTION AND U.S. OMAS THAT ARE SELECTIVE IN EFFECT AND POSSIBLY (B) ART. XIX PERMITS

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SELECTIVE SAFEGUARDS. THE DANGER OF SUCH A DISCUSSION, IT SEEMS TO US, IS THAT SELECTIVITY MIGHT BE GIVEN OVERT AND EXPLICIT ENDORSEMENT BY AT LEAST ONE MAJOR GATT AND MTN PARTICIPANT AS CONSISTENT WITH THE GATT AS IT NOW STANDS.

BREWSTER

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